CHAPTER NINE
COLONIAL LINGUISTICS AND THE INVENTION
OF LANGUAGE
SINFREE B.MAKONI, CRISTINE G.SEVERO
AND ASHRAF ABDELHAY

1.Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to contribute to the large and profitable debate about how language practice and policy have been historically shaped by local contexts. Our focus here is on colonial linguistics in the context of Africa. We problematise the historical and political processes of language invention in the colonial contexts. This means that we do not assume languages as natural or a prior reality but, rather, as a product of social practice. We consider colonial linguistics as a contemporary approach that has revisited colonial narratives on the political role played by language in colonising processes. This means taking into account not only the Age of Discovery, but also the current reconfigured and redesigned colonial and colonising power relations. We interrogate the way that scholarship on language policy has traditionally faced the relationship between colonisation and language.

Even though language policy is seen as a modern discipline that arose along with reflections on the relationship between language,‘developing’ nations and the emergence of new independent nations in Africa during the 1960s and 1970s, we consider that issues that entail coloniality and language are not sufficiently addressed. Examples include the generic, homogeneous and top-down use of the term 'colonial' to cover complex, ambivalent and heterogeneous colonised and ex-colonised realities through the use of broad categories, such as 'colonial policy','colonial expansion','post-colonial indigenous language','colonial language','colonial area','colonial power' and 'colonial world',among others, to cover local contexts.

Colonial linguistics is an interpretive perspective that inspects the role that linguistics plays in the construction of specific cultural stereotypes for non-Western individuals and societies. As a programme, colonial linguistics endorses a critical attitude that intends to deconstruct the taken-for grantedness of language: the concept of 'language' is not treated as a given but, rather, as a problem to be understood through historical and critical enquiries(Warnke and Stoltz 2013:471).Further, language practice is intimately linked with other wider socio-political phenomena and forces. Although the mainstream(formalised)theory of language reduces language to the ‘informative function'of communicating abstract propositions and ideas(language as a 'neutral' means of communication), colonial linguistics

focuses on the ideological (or indexical)functions that language use is socially oriented to serve. It tries to understand how cultural politics is conducted through the terrain of language, including how language is used as a proxy to articulate ‘extra-linguistic' concerns in settings shaped by unequal power relations, such as colonial contexts(Abdelhay and Makoni 2018;Abdelhay, Eljak, Mugaddam and Makoni 2016; Suleiman 2013).

Colonial linguistics endorses a conflict perspective to understand how macro-scale structures of domination are discursively enacted, appropriated and transformed at the micro-scale of social interaction. It focuses on the semiotic strategies of identity construction in its all-observable dimensions (Irvine and Gal 2000).Further, colonial linguistics views the canonical formulation of ‘language'(as a self-contained entity with a name, e.g. English, French,German)as a political invention, a product of and a resource for the construction of projects of belonging. Generally speaking, the very idea of ‘discrete' and 'countable' languages is a modernist construction by orthographic literacy and standardisation procedures to achieve specific socio-economic ends. It is in this sense that language and literacy are instruments of social control and inequality because they are elements of the machinery of modern governmentality (Blommaert and Rampton 2011). Collins(2006:251)argued,“Orthographies (systems of inscription) are never neutral phenomena. They are instead often the object of sharp controversy over the best (i.e. the most authentic or scientific) way to represent a given language.”

The effect of the European colonial text-artefactualisation of local communicative styles(turning languages into ‘portable things') is profound: it has created an artificial (mis)representation of socially layered multilingual geographies (Blommaert 2008; Errington 2008;Irvine and Gal 2000; Makoni and Pennycook 2007;Said 1978). Modermist ideologies of language also have led to the emergence of 'discourses of language endangerment' (Duchene and Heller 2007) and ‘language anxiety'(Abdelhay and Makoni 2018). The moment that we try to look at Africa from a non-enumerating ideology, we may have a different epistemological version of reality.

The (colonial) monoglot ideology of language (Silverstein 1996) also has shaped the way that we view Africa through school literacy. In this ideology, Africa and illiteracy are synonyms. This observation should not in any way imply that Africa lacked any pre-colonial literacy traditions; on the contrary, there had always been‘indigenous'literacy practices in Africa (see Abdelhay,Juffermans and Asfahan 2014). The word‘indigeneity’, however, should not invariably be taken to mean ‘non-Western' because in some African contexts, such as Sudan, Eurocentric discourses on identity and language operated precisely through what was promoted as ‘local’

(Abdelhay et al.2016).As part of this complex of resources, writing is no longer considered a secondary mirror of speech but, rather,a discursive action with serious effects. The task here, then, is to understand how writing as a technology is exploited by colonial missionary linguists to create social semiotic boundaries that,through institutional acts of regimentation, are naturalised and thus converted into 'natural facts'.

As we show in our analytic commentary on the (post-colonial) context of Sudan, the result of the colonial language-planning practices is that script choices are ideological because they implicate issues that are not necessarily purely‘linguistic'(or ‘informative'). The observation that the language theology link is a product of a particular ideological enterprise of language is a case in point. Consequently,(post)colonial debates about orthography and script that are,in principle,debates about socio-political concerns articulated on the terrain of language have some roots in colonial language (educational) policies and practices. Colonial language-planning practices left a socio-linguistic infrastructure that is largely incorporated and integrated into the post-colonial systems of civil service and education in Africa(Bassiouney 2009).

In other words,in contexts of struggle, linguistic choices are converted into metadiscursive statements about spatial and cultural identities. As we see in the case of Sudan, an effect of the colonial missionary regime of language is that Latin script is readily and indexically correlated with Christianity and Western rationalism, while Arabic script is associated with Islam and Eastern traditionalism(Abdelhay,B. Makoni,S. Makoni and Mugaddam 2011). One of the consequences of these observations is that terms such as 'vernacular',‘local language',‘indigenous language'and ‘mother tongue' are not part of the ‘natural order of things' but, rather, are part of the ‘colonial order of things'.Methodologically, to understand the discourses on/about language in Africa, we need to inspect the ‘natural history'(Silverstein and Urban 1996) of these discourses by integrating them into the wider socio-political universes within which they were constructed and through which they were naturalised.

In light of the above discussion, we organise our chapter into two sections. First, we consider British colonisation and its effects on Sudan's linguistic contexts. Second, we consider Portuguese colonisation and the Brazilian linguistic contexts. We aim at problematising the concept of language in both colonial contexts, pointing out the political and ideological linguistic frameworks that underlie local language policy and planning.

In general terms, we conclude that the outcomes of a comparative perspective of colonial policies in Sudan and Brazil are the following:(i)

while Sudan can be considered a highly divided country,a mosaic of constructed tribal units, Brazil has been invented as a fairly monolingual country;(ii) such realities are aligned to different colonial histories-while Sudan has gone through a process of independence from British politics, Brazil gained its independence at the beginning of the 19th century from Portuguese colonisation;(iii) British and Portuguese colonisations operated differently in terms of language policy;(iv)South America's process of decolonisation should be seen in relation to several independence struggles that occurred in America in the 19th century, while Sudan's independence should be seen in relation to a broader African movement in the 20th century; and (v) while slavery played a key role in Brazilian colonisation, linking Brazil and Africa in specific ways, in Sudan the invention of tribes and indigenous languages integrated a racial and colonial politics.

2. The British colonial linguistics and the villagisation of identities in Sudan

Sudan, like the rest of the nation states in Africa, was formed through various historical forces. One such force is the British colonial system of governance(nominally known as the Anglo-Egyptian rule or Condominium 1898-1956). In this section, we focus on the key British colonial linguistic practices in Sudan, paying special attention to the goal-oriented policies of inventing self-contained villagised and indigenous ethnolinguistic identities. The aim is to show how linguistics was implicated in the colonial production of racially enclosed tribal units in Sudan.

Post-independent language policies were deeply shaped by the British colonial discourses on language and subjectivity(Abdelhay et al. 2016; Sharkey 2008). The systematic British colonial division of the space that ‘enregistered'(Agha 2007) specific forms of language with specific places was re-enacted through the very same post-colonial liberating policies that sought to undo this colonial regime of discursive governance. Through the brutal implementation of divide-and-rule policies, such as the‘Southern Policy'(officially declared in a 1930 memorandum),the British colonial system restructured the already-existing cultural geography into the ‘South' and the 'North' as socio-political indices of polarised identities, with the ‘indigenous' ethnolinguistic identities as the unmarked reference in southern Sudan. The following excerpt embodies the key goal of the colonial Southern Policy:

The policy of the Government in the Southern Sudan is to build up a series of self-contained racial or tribal units with structure and organisation based, to whatever extent the requirements of equity and good government permit, upon indigenous customs, traditional usage, and beliefs … Apart from the fact that the restriction of Arabic is an essential feature of the general scheme

it must not be forgotten that Arabic, being neither the language of the governing nor the governed, will progressively deteriorate. The type of Arabic at present spoken provides signal proof of this. It cannot be used as a means of communication on anything but the most simple matters, and only if it were first unlearned and then relearned in a less crude form and adopted as the language of instruction in the schools could it fulfill the growing requirements of the future. The local vernaculars and English, on the other hand, will in every case be the language of one of the two parties conversing and one party will therefore always be improving the other. (1930 Memorandum on Southern Policy,as cited in Abdel-Rahim 1965:20-23, emphasis ours)

Before commenting on how the above policy was implemented,we should note that another British colonial policy in Sudan with the same goal (to construct anti-Arab-Islamic indigenous ethnolinguistic identities)is known as the 'Nuba Policy' and was embedded in a 1931 memorandum formulated by A.J.Gillan (then-Governor of Kordofan and later Civil Secretary)(for a detailed discussion, see Abdelhay 2010). The memorandum was titled 'Some Aspects of Nuba Administration'.The goal of this colonial policy was literally the invention of a'Nuba race'as a self-contained entity. The following excerpt embodies this key goal of the colonial Nuba Policy:

How many reasonably well informed outsiders are there who realise that there is no 'Nuba'tribe or race, but an as yet unknown number of entirely different stocks, of different cultures, religions and stages of civilisation, speaking perhaps as many as ten entirely different languages and some fifty dialects more or less mutually unintelligible? It is these factors that in broad outline constitute half the‘Nuba Problem'in as far as it concerns native administration and indigenous culture, the other half being their contiguity with the Arab. If we were dealing with one solid and separate pagan race there might still be a problem, but its solution would be comparatively simple and would not be urgent. We should only have to isolate it within a metaphorical wall and deal with it at our convenience.(Gillan 1931:6)

What is worth noting here is that, as the above excerpt indicates, there was no 'Nuba tribe or race' in the way imagined by the British colonial system, and, thus, the task was to invent it, using the Western binary system of metaphorical imagination (urban versus tribal identities). Before the colonial policy intervention, there were cross-cultural interactions among the individuals and the groups in the area, and, thus, the boundaries were intersectionally fluid and dynamic. The above Nuba Policy was designed precisely to tribalise identities (anchoring identities to places), using the strategy of villagisation. The result would be, we contend, a colonially created version of multilingualism(urban Arabic-speaking Muslims versus

tribal/indigenous pagan/Christian Nubas). The romanticising strategy of villagisation is formulated by Gillan(1931:28) in the following terms:

Instead of an enlarged town the present plan is to institute a Nuba village, or series of villages, within easy distance of the town, where the Nuba, whether permanently or temporarily, can live as far as possible under tribal conditions .. I am convinced that villagisation rather than urbanisation is the policy to adopt.

Most important, the colonial education system was partly responsible for the implementation of this Nuba Policy of villagisation. In a ‘Memorandum on Educational Policy in the Nuba Pagan Area',the Secretary for Education and Health, J. G. Matthew(cited in Gillan 1931: vi), stated more generally:“The wish of the Government is that Nubas should develop on their own lines and be assisted to build up self-contained racial or tribal units.”The missionaries'educational practices also played a significant role in the implementation of the colonial Southern Policy. One powerful strategy here was the organisation of colonial conferences, such as the Rejaf Language Conference of 1928,which intended to create ‘language groups'in Southern Sudan. Through processes of codification, the linguistic resources in the southern part were developed and formalised by the Christian missionaries into clearly demarcated ‘proper languages'. Again, this effected an official image of linguistic pluralism or multilingualism as naturally demarcated homogeneities. The use of the language-planning instruments did not aim solely to improve communicative efficiency but, most importantly, to articulate by proxy extra-linguistic concerns embedded in the larger socio-political project of the colonial government (to divide the space along ethnic and theological lines).

The colonial regime of language systematically correlated Arabic with Islam,and, in effect, Arabic became indexically ‘the' carrier of a dangerous discourse. The task orientation of the colonial Southern Policy in its discursive dimension was,thus, to stamp out Arabic from the southern region. A similar policy of cultural control was exercised in the North, where artificial tribal boundaries were constructed, and the tribal chiefs were allocated state powers, such as the collection of taxes. The product of these colonial policies was that the‘South' and the ‘North'have become physically and ideologically self-contained social spaces, and the identities anchored to these spaces have become, in effect, particularly through post colonial practices of social reproduction,part of the‘natural order of things'.

A few years before independence, however, the colonial regime changed its separatist policy and decided to reunite the now-perceived two

antagonistic parts. The ideological seeds of one of the longest civil conflicts in Africa, however, had already been firmly planted, and the colonial discourse on'villagised'and 'indigenous'languages and identities was later (re)appropriated in post-colonial policies and peace agreements.

Following independence, the central governments in the North tried to implement a monoglot ideology of normalisation to reverse the effects of the separatist colonial policies. Arabicisation and Islamisation of the South were the key features of this monoglot scheme,and the state's brutal violence was readily employed to silence the southern resistance(see Nyombe 1997). The north-south relations erupted into a fully-fledged armed conflict that was eventually ended by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement 2005-2011(CPA 2005), which is also famously known as the Naivasha Peace Agreement (as it is signed in Naivasha in Kenya). It is this peace accord that recognised the right of the Southerners to self determination through a referendum. Most significantly, it deploys the epithet‘indigenous languages',which is intertextual with the British
colonial discourse sketched above. The CPA contained a significant language policy that is known as Naivasha language policy(Abdelhay et al. 2011). This language policy stipulates(CPA 2005:26-27):

(1)All the indigenous languages are national languages which shall be respected, developed and promoted;
(2)The Arabic language is the widely spoken national language in the Sudan;
(3)Arabic,as a major language at the national level, and English shall be the official working languages of National Government business and languages of instruction for higher education;
(4)In addition to Arabic and English,the legislature of any sub-national level of government may adopt any other national language(s)as additional official working language(s) at its level; and
(5)The use of either language [Arabic or English] at any level of government or education shall not be discriminated against.

Notwithstanding the colonial cultural and political production of ‘tribalised/villagised' identities in Sudan, it would be grossly misleading to imply that southern elites or resistance leaders bought into this colonial discourse on language and identity. For example,the late southern leader John Garang's post-colonial project of the 'New Sudan'was intended to dismantle these colonially inherited boundaries, which were blindly embraced as the basis of their cultural politics by a significant number of post-colonial governments:

The history of the Sudanese people from time immemorial has been the

struggle of the masses of the people against internal and external oppression. The oppressor has time and again employed various policies and methods of destroying or weakening the just struggle of our people, including the most notorious policy of 'divide and rule'. To this end the oppressor has divided the Sudanese people into Northerners and Southerners; Westerners and Easterners, Halfawin and the so-called Awlad et Balad who have hitherto wielded political power in Khartoum; while in the South, people have been politicized along tribal lines resulting in such ridiculous slogans as 'Dinka Unity','Great Equatoria','Bari Speakers','Luo Unity' and so forth. The oppressor has also divided us into Muslims and Christians, and into Arabs and Africans.(Garang 1992:19)

The first step taken by Garang(1992)toward (relative)emancipation from the domination of this (post)colonial discourse was to recognise that these 'homogenised identities'are a product of the historical order of things:
we are a product of history and not nature.

3.African-Brazilian Portuguese as a political invention

In this chapter, we avoid reproducing the ideological concepts of languages as compartmentalised, fragmented, labelled and hierarchical units; rather, we assume the conception of language as a political and historical invention (Errington 2008;Irvine 2008; Makoni and Pennycook 2007;Phillipson 1992; Severo and Makoni 2015).Such a political and critical perspective aims at problematising both colonial and modern linguistics'‘politics of truth'(Foucault 1977) by resisting the ‘compartmentalisation principle’ (Harris 1984), which includes avoiding the reproduction of certain concepts of language,such as the mother language,second language,foreign language and language proficiency, among others. Such concepts are reinforced by ideological ideas, such as the commoditisation of languages, which feed the economic industry of language teaching and testing (Duchene and Heller 2011),language as natural national flags(Rajagopalan 2013) and the belief in a direct two-way relationship between language and identity(Severo and Makoni 2015).

We recognise that the process of Africanisation of Western languages, by inventing such categories as African-American English or African Brazilian Portuguese,are ideologically and discursively constituted and,
therefore, should be submitted to ongoing review and critical inquiries. We argue that a cross-Atlantic invention of African languages does not necessarily have to correspond with either historical or contemporary descriptions of African languages.(Makoni and Pennycook 2005:152).

Brazil is a former Portuguese colony and a member of the Community

of Portuguese Speaking Countries(CPLP),along with Cape Verde, Mozambique,Angola,East Timor and others. The Portuguese empire created interconnectedness among different geopolitical contexts, mainly Brazil and African countries. These associations were facilitated by a colonial landscape shaped, to a large extent, by language, religion and the military. The relationship between Brazil and Africa can be analysed from the following perspectives:(i) the politics of slavery in the colonial era, between the 16th and 19th centuries;(ii)the religious invention of 'Christian-lects' by Jesuits(Severo and Makoni 2015);and(iii) the modern and nationalistic politics that invented Brazilian Portuguese as different from European Portuguese, mainly from the 19th century onwards. Such aspects, which are discussed below, contributed to the invention of African Brazilian Portuguese.

The politics of slavery was a defining feature of Portuguese colonial practice:"Portugal was the first European nation to initiate slavery in Africa, and was the last to abolish it"(Lobban 1995:25). By way of example, the current estimate of the historical presence of Africans in Brazil is that, between 1550 and 1855,four million enslaved Africans were brought in from different regions, such as Guinea and Costa de Mina in the 16th century, and Congo and Angola in the 17th and 18th centuries. Brazil became the largest destination, outside Africa, of Africans in the colonial era. Linguists classify populations brought to Brazil into two large 'ethnolinguistic groups':the Sudanese from West Africa, and the Bantu from equatorial and tropical Africa.

When comparing Catholic missionary work in Brazil with that in African countries, some important differences can be noticed. In Brazil, the relationship established between the Jesuits and the so-called indigenous people and the African people was different, as the Church condemned indigenous slavery but validated, for economic reasons, African enslavement:"African slavery was approved for reasons of subsistence of the mission"(Hoormaert, Azzi, Der Grijp and Brod 1983:259). The enslaved African people under control of the missionaries were called 'dos Santos' (Saints), a surname that became common in Brazil, although a few Jesuits, such as Luis do Gra, disapproved of African slavery(Sá 2007). We notice a colonial hierarchical system that classified indigenous groups as different from Africans in Brazil. Whereas the former were capable of being 'civilised' and 'Christianised',the latter had their'enslaved condition' justified by the rhetorical construction of slavery as a consequence of original sin.

Such rhetoric,together with other elements,helped to construct an image of black African people as coin-men:

The noun 'Black' is the name given to the product resulting from the process by which people of African cultures are transformed into living minerals ….. the plantation in the New World is the place of its smelting, and Europe, the place of its conversion into currency.(Mbembe 2014:78)

Christianity and slavery were deeply connected,as only enslaved Africans who had become Christians could be sold and only Christians could acquire them:“The Church in Angola derived much of its income by instructing and baptizing the enslaved”(Isichei 1995:71). Antonio Vieira, a famous Jesuit in Brazil in the 17th century, gave several sermons that justified African slavery of black people:

"Christ naked, and you naked; Christ starving, and you hungry; Christ completely mistreated, and you as well. The irons, the prisons, the lashes, the wounds, the offensive names - all these elements make part of your imitation, which, if accompanied by patience, will also bring the merit of the martyrdom”(Vieira 1958:261-262).

The extent to which the Portuguese religion contributed to the invention of languages can be exemplified by the first Bible translation to Portuguese in Africa and the first book written in a Bantu language by a Portuguese priest in Brazil in 1642(Spencer 1974).In addition,“By 1957 there were probably between 8,000 and 10,000 missionaries, Catholic and Protestant, in Sub-Sahara Africa … Perhaps fifty to sixty percent of missionaries in Africa can claim some competence in an African language”(Welmers 1974: 192-193).The contact between Christian missionaries and the so-called indigenous and African peoples in colonial Brazil and Africa produced the emergence of'Christian-lects'(Severo and Makoni 2015), a set of linguistic discourses and instruments that were used as a mechanism of domination by framing people and languages in specific ways, inventing and naming local languages,inventing ethnolinguistic categories that overlapped ethnicity and language using literacy as a framework to define what counts as language, and translating several Christian discourses to‘local' languages that, in turn, helped to frame the 'local'in specific ways (Irvine and Gal 2000; Makoni and Pennycook 2007;Phillipson 1992).Currently, missionaries' interest in languages is evident in the description, analysis, writing and teaching of languages, as we can notice in the intense work of Bible translation to ‘local' languages by the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

The contemporary linguistic discourse reinforces African-Brazilian Portuguese as a fragmentary conception of language in which pieces of languages, such as lexicon, syntax and prosodic elements, shape a shredded language. African-Brazilian Portuguese,from a linguistic perspective,

would be the result of an‘irregular process of acquisition'of Portuguese by Africans(Lucchesi,Baxter and Ribeiro 2009). We problematise the framework of ‘languages in contact',as it reproduces the Eurocentric concept of compartmentalised languages. We argue that the Creolist perspective, widely used as a framework to explain the colonial languages, is not neutral but, rather, produces ideological effects on the way that 'local' languages have been framed since the colonial era.Curiously, linguist Hugo Schuchardt(1842-1927)used Portuguese colonial contact with‘local languages'to frame the Creolist perspective.

The creation of modern Brazil started in the mid-19th century, when independence from Portugal took place. Several Brazilian intellectuals, who had studied in Portugal, helped to create the idea of a Brazilian nation. Nation and nationalism are discursively invented, as stated by Said(1989: 221):“Nationalism, resurgent or new, fastens on narratives for structuring, assimilating, or excluding one or another version of history.”In Brazil, nationalism constructed specific discourses on the role played by African languages and discourses by bringing together several elements, such as the ideas of Brazilianness,Afro-Brazilianness,regionalism,oral culture, popular culture, rurality and illiteracy. We argue that the historical invention of African-Brazilian Portuguese is related to how discourses on Africa and African people were politically shaped in Brazil,reinforcing and naturalising the asymmetrical and racist as well as excluding power relations in Brazilian society. Some examples of power relations include:

(i) the idea of Brazil being a racial democracy as a result of Lusotropicalism, an ideological explication given by the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freire (1933)for Brazilian identity formation that would have included the harmonic fusion/miscegenation of the Portuguese and Africans originating the Mestizo; in linguistic terms,'African-Brazilian Portuguese' would reproduce the ideological perspective of fusion and miscegenation, erasing important power relations that involve different symbolic worlds;

(ii)the emergence of dialectology as a way of framing Brazilian linguistic diversity in the 19th century by accommodating linguistic and discursive diversity into a national discourse.Language difference would be labelled as 'linguistic regionalism'.Such discourse submitted African languages and discourses to regional interpretation that worked under a national umbrella(Severo 2015). Dialectology helped to regionalise languages by overlapping geography and language. It is not by chance that dialectology was at the service of legitimation and delimitation of national boundaries:“The 19th century saw the triumph of the nation-state, on the one hand, and the establishment of the dialect geography, on the other” (Auer 2002:4);

(iii) the construction of a framework that considers African linguistic influences in Brazilian Portuguese from the perspective of‘popular tradition'. Several intellectuals, inscribed into the Modernist Brazilian Movement, proposed the influence of African rhythm, beat, dance and prosody into Brazilian music and orality. Mario de Andrade,a famous Brazilian Modermnist(1891-1945),proposed that Brazilian music“comes from strange sources: the Amerindian in small percentage; the African in a much larger percentage; the Portuguese in vast percentage”(Andrade 1928:7). The idea of a miscegenated cultural and racial society would reverberate into a miscegenated musical expression. In 1932,anthropologist and psychiatrist Nina Rodrigues published the book Os Africanos no Brasil (Africans in Brazil) in 1932, in which he describes the structural linguistic influence of African languages, Yoruba and Bantu, on Brazilian Portuguese. Rodrigues also mentions the African rhythm of these languages and uses a linguistic perspective that divides languages into pieces and codifies them into a script model, reinforcing the ‘politics of orthography'(Irvine 2008). We argue that‘popular culture' and ‘folklore' are discursive and political constructions that must be contextualised socio-historically(Canclini 2008; Hall 1996). In general, the concept of popular culture, on the one hand, is linked to political projects that seek to assimilate the‘people'within discourses of government and control and, on the other hand, is taken as a sign of ideological struggles and tensions; and

(iv) the modern Brazilian linguistics that has operated with two broad and polarised categories to define Portuguese language in Brazil: popular Portuguese(Vernacular Portuguese,which includes African-Brazilian Portuguese) and Standard Portuguese. This apparently dichotomous view has sometimes been represented by a more fluid one, in which, at one end, there is rural African-Brazilian Portuguese and, at the other end, urban Standard Portuguese. Between these two extremes are rural dialects and non-standard urban speeches (Petter and Oliveira 2011). The categories of rurality and urbanity,instead of regionalism,become central to the definition of what counts as African-Brazilian Portuguese in contemporary discourses. An example of the complicated relationship between rurality and orality versus urbanity and literacy is the political role that literacy plays in reinforcing colonial categories. The Brazilian census of 2010 shows that the highest rate of illiteracy is located in north-east Brazil, especially in rural areas,where a heterogeneous group of people live and which includes quilombolas,field workers,farmers, extractivists, landless fishermen and people of the forest; among these groups, the elderly, black and'indigenous' women stand out with the lowest literacy rates (Peres 2011).

We argue that the ideology of literacy helps to ratify a negative social representation of local people as well as validates differentiation between

urban and rural.If, for example,we consider quilombola communities, which were constituted as a result of political struggles of former enslaved African people in Brazil to legitimise lands and gain the freedom to exercise their practices, values and beliefs (Leite 2000), the illiteracy rate helps to label communicative practices as discredited, especially in the face of a state whose administrative machinery is based on writing. Writing is effectively a ‘technology of power’(Foucault 1977). In addition, the invention of African-Brazilian Portuguese as a rural and isolated variety of Portuguese helps to reinforce the complicated myth of authenticity, a political discourse invented and reinforced by intellectuals and political agents, as what is considered authentic may vary if we consider the local perspective (Makoni and Meinhof 2004).

Finally,by understanding the complex way that African experiences were historically and politically framed by several official and institutional discourses in Brazil, we may problematise power relations inscribed into miscegenated and creolised discourses. We agree with Hall(1996:225) that:“The ways in which black people, black experiences, were positioned and subjected in the dominant regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalisation".In this sense, we claim for a critical perspective of language that allows us to destabilise the 'limits of the right to govern'(Foucault 1977).

4.Final remarks

The aim of this chapter was to highlight the political and social importance of a critical perspective toward the relationship between colonial experience and language policy by showing how language in colonised contexts works as an arena of ideological and material struggles, such as in the cases of Sudan and Brazil.In both cases, language viewed as a self-enclosed system of communication is a historical invention that helped to shape power relations through a politics of division, classification, hierarchisation and differentiation. There are points of convergence and difference between the Portuguese and the British colonial systems in Brazil and Sudan, respectively. In both cases, language is cued with a monoglot function to create local ethnic identities to achieve extra-linguistic ends. For example, both the Portuguese and the British systems of colonial control constructed 'local' ethnolinguistic identities through the processes of Africanisation and villagisation in contrast to the Western forms of identity (in Brazil) and Arabic language and Islam (in Sudan).

Again,in both cases, the colonial regimes used‘language'as a geopolitical discursive strategy of 'divide into blocks and rule'.Brazilian Portuguese was created as distinct from Portuguese proper and it was

converted into a diacritic of a particular Africanised identity. A similar observation obtains in the case of Sudan where the British colonial policy was intended to invent a‘pure'Nuba race or uncontaminated southern

identities (pure and uncontaminated by the effects of Islam and Arabic).In both cases, ideas of north, south, literacy, urbanity, rurality and tribalism are political ideas that, under the linguistic umbrella of Arabic,English or African-Brazilian Portuguese, helped to reinforce power relations, social asymmetry and social injustice.

However,there are points of difference between the two forms of colonial systems of domination. In the case of Brazil, the whole state was imagined as a single,homogeneous and stable socio-linguistic space, whereas in Sudan, the objective was to produce multiple homogeneities (tribal units). Unlike the British colonial practice in Sudan, slavery was the defining motive and feature of the Portuguese colonial rule. In an increasing context of global relations and intercultural encounters, we claim that the field of language policy and, importantly, its researchers should be sensitive to such issues, helping to avoid reproducing colonial ideologies and practices.